South Carolina DHEC's WaterWatch

UPDATE Summer 2003

Welcome, Friends of Lawson's Fork Creek!

The *Friends of Lawson's Fork* are dedicated to maintaining a natural treasure in Spartanburg County. This new Water Watch group plans to learn more about ways to protect and improve the water quality of Lawson's Fork Creek. The creek begins near Inman, SC and flows 29 miles through Spartanburg County. It joins the Pacolet River east of Spartanburg. This scenic creek receives runoff from both rural and urban sources. To help identify problems or potential problems, *Friends of Lawson's Fork* monitor six sites along the length of the creek. Welcome to Water Watch, and keep up the good work!

"Lawson's Fork is a place where art, science, history and recreation have come together. Friends of Lawson's Fork are focusing attention on this beautiful, historic, though damaged, natural resource. We invite you to join, immerse yourself, and "explore the interior".
-Friends of Lawson's Fork homepage. www.lawsonsfork.org.

Save This Date: October 18!

America's Clean Water Foundation is teaming up with the International Water Association to promote **World Water Monitoring Day** (WWMD), October 18, 2003.

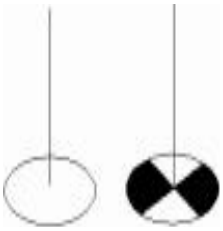
In October of 2002, 75,000 people across the United States took part in events honoring National Water Monitoring Day. They participated in water quality monitoring, educational outreach opportunities and water festivals.

This year, citizens and groups *from around the globe* are invited to share in the experience of water quality monitoring. Life depends on clean water. WWMD will show people how their actions affect their water resources. Hopefully, world citizens will then choose to protect water quality by changing their thoughts and actions. The data collected during WWMD will provide a base for future monitoring efforts.

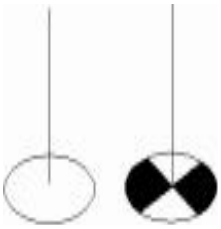
For those who have never monitored, low-cost kits are available. The kits measure temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and turbidity. Groups that already monitor are encouraged to use their own monitoring procedures. Everyone should collect data accurately and safely.

Please think about being a part of WWMD. You can monitor anytime between September 18 and October 18. If your group already monitors water quality, why not submit your data? If your group does not have a monitoring program in place, this is a great time to start. Outreach education is another way for you to contribute to WWMD. Stencil a storm drain, hold a water festival, or write an article for your local paper.

To find out more about World Water Monitoring Day, visit http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.com.



Did You Dip?



The Great North American Secchi Dip-In took place from June 28 to July 13, 2003. This annual event is used to gather information and to let the public know about transparency monitoring. Most Dip-In volunteers use a Secchi disk to measure the turbidity (water clarity) of lakes and reservoirs. Turbidity tubes, turbidity meters or a black Secchi disk can be used to take measurements in rivers and estuaries.

Turbidity refers to how clear or how cloudy the water is. Soil and algae in the water can reduce clarity. Storms and human activity disturb soil and cause it to run off into lakes and streams. In addition, bottom sediments can be stirred up by too much activity in the water, either from humans or fish. Soil, along with runoff from yards and farms, carries nutrients into the water. Excessive nutrient levels in the water can contribute to algae growth. In addition to making water cloudy, particles of soil, sediments and algae absorb heat and block light from reaching underwater plants. This can lead to a decrease in the amount of oxygen in the water. Particles in the water can also clog the gills of fish.

If your Water Watch group has a monitoring program in place, and you collected transparency data during the dates of the Dip-In, you can still send in your data. You can also send in data from dates outside the Dip-In period. This data will be used to look at seasonal changes. Visit the Dip-In website, http://dipin.kent.edu/, to download a data entry form or to enter data online. If you didn't "dip" this year, there is always next year!

Kent State University coordinates the Dip-In with help from the US Environmental Protection Agency and the North American Lake Management Society.

Coming events

- Beach Sweep/River Sweep, September 20, 2003. For coastal cleanup contact Susan Ferris (843) 727-2078, susan.ferris@scseagrant.org. For inland cleanup contact Bobbie Adams (803) 734-9108, adams @water.dnr.state.sc.us.
- Low Impact Development Workshops, October 22 & 23, Columbia, SC. For information see www.sc.edu/sustainableu and click on conferences or call Anne Marie Johnson at (803) 898-4187, or johnsam@dhec.sc.gov.
- 3rd National Conference: Nonpoint Source Pollution Information & Education Programs, October 20-23, 2003, Congress Plaza Hotel -- Chicago, Illinois. Contact Bob Kirschner, bkirschn@chicagobotanic.org.

The Car Is Clean, But What About The Water?

Cars that are washed in the street or on the driveway can pollute our waterways. Each weekend, thousands of do-it-yourselfers wash cars in streets and driveways across South Carolina. The soapy water that runs off cars can contain oil, grease, dirt, and metals. If these substances enter storm drains, they eventually make their way, untreated, into lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands and estuaries. Car wash runoff occurs even in dry weather.

Washing your car on a graveled or grassy surface is one way to keep the runoff out of storm drains. This lets water and pollutants filter through the ground.

Other ways to protect the environment are to:

- Use biodegradable, low- or no-phosphate soaps. (Phosphates may lead to less oxygen in wet habitats due to the decay of extra plant growth.)
- Dump the wash water down the drain so it goes through the sewer.
- Use water hoses with automatic shutoff nozzles.
- Wash your car less often.

Using a commercial car wash is even better for the environment. Water from commercial car washes is sent to the sewer and treated before it is used again. Most of these systems also use less water than a home wash. The average person takes 5 to 6 minutes to wash his car and uses 50 or more gallons of water. Most commercial car washes use 20 gallons of water per wash.

Don't forget community car wash events. These time-honored fundraisers are not kind to nearby water bodies. In some communities, groups must keep their wash water out of nearby storm drains. They have to block the storm drains and send the runoff to sewers through special filters, or onto graveled or grassy surfaces. Luckily, in some communities there are other ways to have a car wash. Commercial car washes may allow the use of their facilities for fundraisers, or supply discount tickets for the group to sell.

Use and tell others about these ideas—you can keep your car clean, and the water, too!

Have I heard from you lately?

Did I receive your annual activity report? If not, please fill it out and return it to me. If you lost your report, let me know. I can mail, fax or e-mail a new copy to you. Call Lynne LaSalle, Water Watch Coordinator, (803) 898-4211.

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